

## God Is On His Own Side

“When Joshua was by Jericho, He lifted up His eyes and looked, and behold, a man was standing before him with His drawn sword in His hand. And Joshua went to him and said to him, “Are you for us, or for our adversaries?” <sup>14</sup>And He said, “*No; but I am the commander of the army of the LORD.*”

*Joshua 5:13-14*

We always try to shrink God. We want God to be partisan, to be on *our* side and against our enemies. So, it was natural for Joshua to ask the angel standing in front of him with a sword in His hand: “Whose side are you on?” The angel said that He was not on Joshua side or on the side of Joshua’s enemies. Rather He said “No...I am the commander of the army of the Lord.” In other words, God is on His own side.

We want a safe God, a manageable God. But God does not belong to any political party, ethnic group or club. It seems so foolish to say that; it is so obvious. But it seems like the entire movement of mankind has been to enlist God to support each man’s own cause, party or viewpoint. We act as if God can be persuaded, coerced, cajoled deceived or manipulated to do what *we* want.

At the beginning of World War II heavyweight champion Joe Louis was asked about American involvement in the war and our prospects for success. He answered: “We Will Win Because We Are On God’s Side.” God does not need us to accomplish His plans. However, with condescending love He uses whomever He chooses to use to accomplish His plans. He no more needs us to this end than the sun needs a matchstick in order to remain bright and hot.

God is sovereign. He does as He pleases, only as He pleases and always as He pleases. To be a Christian means to continually submit to God, to seek and to do His will, not our own will. If we do not do this, we will constantly be trying to manage God, to direct His steps, to get Him to do our agenda. When we think He succeeds in doing what we want, we are thankful. But when He seems to depart from our agenda, we get disheartened and may even turn away from Him. Both attitudes are wrong; both are dangerous. Our souls are at stake.

Joshua's query was understandable. God had commanded the Hebrews to enter and take dominion in the Promise Land then occupied by enemies. The Hebrews were surrounded by enemies: Egypt to the south and to the north and east the Hittites, Canaanites and others. Joshua knew God was *with them* and *for them*. However, he did not know whether the soldier standing before him was from God. Today we are on the other side of the cross. Now we should never ask whether God is *for us*. The Cross of Jesus Christ proves that God is always *for us*. Therefore, the issue is always this: are *we* on God's side?

The challenge of the Christian life is to be in a state of mind in which we are continually saying to God: "Not *my* will, but *Thine* be done."